Background

Michigan's Electronic Identification (EID) Program was launched as a pilot project in November 2001 as part of the state's bovine tuberculosis eradication plan. It provides state and federal regulators and the livestock industry with a system for quickly tracking the movement of individual animals from the farm to market. The program was developed and implemented through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS).

EID incorporates the latest technology, a tag imbedded with a radio frequency device and marked with a unique, individual number that will not be duplicated on any other animal worldwide. Through Michigan's EID Program, producers in the Northeast Lower Peninsula or those with accredited herds can receive these Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) tags free of charge. Each RFID tag is linked to a database that includes information specific to that animal, including date of birth, sex, and type/species. This electronic tag dramatically speeds up the location and tracing of livestock, and ensures the most accurate and up-to-date information.

National F.A.I.R. Program

EID is tied to the National Farm Animal Identification and Records (F.A.I.R.) Program, maintained by the Holstein Association USA, Inc., and the USDA's Generic Database system, to ensure accurate individual animal identification and tracking, and coordination of TB test results and herd status.

The F.A.I.R. system tracks livestock nationwide, using two unique numbers: a premises number, with a unique number assigned to each production unit for participating premises; and an animal number, which uses the American Identification Numbering (AIN) System to assign an official number for each animal. This unique animal number is comparable to a "social security number" for each animal. The place of origin for each participating animal is also recorded.

As of Jan. 22, 2004, there were13,665 active Michigan farm premises currently enrolled in F.A.I.R., over 6,292 premises have animals identified in F.A.I.R. RFID tags are being used on 1,303 of these premises. The Michigan premises enrolled in F.A.I.R. represent 72,262 animals identified with RFIDs. An additional 73,332 RFID tags have been distributed to Michigan farms for use in tagging newborn animals for identification purposes. As the animals are born and identified with the RFID tags, the producers can update the farm information on the F.A.I.R. database to activate the corresponding tag number for that animal.

Web-Based Access and Reporting

The National F.A.I.R. Program maintains premises profiles for each participating production unit, and can accommodate farms with any species of farm animals. Producers can access their premises information regarding animals at the premises, TB test status, Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, and type of farm. They are also able to add animal identification data, obtain a movement permit, or confirm movement of animals into or off of their premises.

The secure Internet site provides state and federal regulators access to up-to-date statistics, allowing them to verify and monitor animal movement and testing activities of participating farms and animals. The secure site and password requirements protect the privacy of producers while ensuring accurate regulatory information.

RFID Reader Installations

RFID readers at packing plants and livestock markets make it possible to track animals as they go from the farm through the marketing system. Total animals seen at slaughter plants were 5,887, and at markets 13,536. RFID readers have been installed at the following packing plants and livestock auction markets:

Packing Plants

- **Taylor Packing Company,** Wyalusing, Pennsylvania
- **Murco** (Smithfield), Plainwell, Michigan

- **Packerland** (Smithfield), Green Bay, Wisconsin
- **Moyer Packing** (Smithfield), Souderton, Pennsylvania
- **Tyson/IBP**, Joslin, Illinois
- **Dress Beef**, Green Bay, Wisconsin

MI Livestock Auction Markets

- **Northern Michigan Livestock Association**, Gaylord
- **United Producers, Inc.**, St. Louis
- **United Producers, Inc.**, Cass City
- **Clare Livestock, LLC**, Clare
- **Lake Odessa Livestock Auction**, Lake Odessa
- **United Producers, Inc.**, Battle Creek
- **Napoleon Livestock Commission**, Napoleon
- **Ravenna Auction, LLC**, Ravenna
- **United Producers, Inc.**, Manchester

Animal Movement Permit System

The EID program and database play a key role in the issuance of movement permits that are currently required in Northeast Michigan as part of the bovine TB eradication effort. A web-based animal movement permit system was initiated in October 2002. Producers can now enter an animal's electronic identification number into the state's web-based system and quickly verify whether all testing requirements have been met. If so, the permit is granted and producers can choose to print the permit of receive it by fax or mail. Since October 2002, 3,247 permits have been issued electronically, representing 19,753 animals.

EID and Michigan's Split State Status Application

EID is an integral part of Michigan's application with USDA for bovine TB split state status. Identifying animals with EID tags from birth to slaughter will help Michigan assure trading partners that the state is effectivly controlling and eradicating bovine TB from its livestock population.

Benefits from the Electronic Identification (EID) System

- Trace-backs and trace-forwards are done in a day rather than weeks.
- Use of the electronic recording system reduces costs for data entry and maintenance.
- EID assures both producers and consumers that bovine tuberculosis in Michigan is under control.
- EID can be used to manage bovine TB and other animal diseases.

For More Information:

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Electronic Identification (EID) Program

A program for livestock in Michigan

A cooperative program of:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Michigan Department of Agriculture
Holstein Association USA, Inc.